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THE HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR

An interview between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. J. I. Hambleton, Bureau of Entomology, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate stations, Tuesday, November 8, 1932.

MISS VAN DEMAN: How do you do, Everybody:

Since today is a special day on the national calendar, we're going to make it a special day on the Household Calendar. Mr. Hambleton of the Bureau of Entomology is over at the other microphone. Perhaps you've already guessed what we're going to talk about. A food that antedates history itself; a food poets sing of in their verses; a food clear as sunshine and glowing like amber; a food full of the fragrance of flowers; a food gathered for us by thousands of pairs of tiny wings. Well, anyway you have it now; honey is our topic today. And it isn't only because of the romance connected with honey that we like it. It's an important food.

MR. HAMBLETON: You're right, Miss Van Deman, we produce each year in the United States around two hundred or two hundred and fifty million pounds of honey. Some of this we export, but most of it we use right here at home, as comb honey and as extracted honey.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Hope you don't mind my interrupting, Mr. Hambleton, but I wish you'd tell us just what you mean by extracted honey. Lots of consumers, I think, are a little puzzled by that term.

MR. HAMBLETON: Yes, that word extracted is rather misleading. A better term would be liquid honey. For extracted honey is nothing more than the sweet liquid, or pure honey, separated from the wax comb.

The empty combs then go back to the hives, and the bees refill them with honey. This is economical all around. The bees do not have to spend their time and energy in making unnecessary comb, and the consumer can buy the liquid honey at a lower price than he can comb or section honey.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Now, another question about liquid or extracted honey, Mr. Hambleton. I've seen clover honey when it looked cloudy and was so stiff we could hardly get it out of the container. It was sold to us as pure honey and it certainly had a wonderful flavor. Does pure honey act this way?

MR. HAMBLETON: Well, Miss Van Deman, you've asked me several questions in one. First, your clover honey was unquestionably pure. There's no profit in adulterating honey, and the pure food laws are so rigidly enforced that nobody could get away with adulteration even if he tried.

Now, it's perfectly natural for extracted clover honey to become cloudy and stiff. Tiny crystals begin to form in most honeys within a few weeks or a few months after extraction from the comb. This in no way affects the flavor
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of the honey. As a matter of fact our Canadian neighbors prefer their honey in solid, crystallized form. If they see liquid honey they think that sirup has been added, just as people on this side of the border think that sugar has been added when they see crystals. Anybody who wishes can easily dissolve these crystals by putting the container of honey in hot water. But don't boil the water or you'll spoil the delicate flavor of your honey and darken the color.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Mr. Hambleton, where should we keep honey, in a warm or a cold place? Some women I know always insist that the honey jar go into the refrigerator.

MR. HAMBLETON: It's a waste of refrigerator space to store honey there. Honey keeps perfectly well at ordinary room temperature.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Now, Mr. Hambleton, here's another question about honey, I often hear debated. What do you consider is the best honey produced in the United States?

MR. HAMBLETON: You've stumped me there. I can't answer that question without getting in bad with some of my beekeeping friends, because each one knows that his honey is the best. Moreover I'd be giving only my personal opinion, and when it comes to judging the flavor of honey one person's preference is as good as another's. Some people like best the dark, strong-flavored buckwheat honey or some of the spicier honeys from the South. Then to others there's no honey so good as the delicately flavored light-colored varieties. When you consider that the deserts, the mountain tops, the fertile valleys, and the broad plains, each contributes a honey characteristic of the region and of the flowers that grow there, then you realize why there is no one best honey, and why our markets have such an abundant supply of honeys widely different in color, flavor, and consistency.

MISS VAN DEMAN: And by the way, Mr. Hambleton, we people in the Bureau of Home Economics are ready any time to give the taste test to some of the different honeys, especially that tupelo honey from the South which you say never crystallizes. And don't forget the star thistle from the Pacific Coast, and the alfalfa and sweet clover honey from the irrigated regions of the West. And if you don't mind include some of the sour wood from the Appalachians, and that good old standby white clover honey. And thank you for giving us all this information about honey today.

Now, just one suggestion for using honey. Perhaps some of you listening in may want to try it this evening as you wait for election returns. Have you ever tried hot spiced cider sweetened with honey? It goes mighty well with cookies, or sandwiches, or old-fashioned election cake, for refreshments on a November evening. Just bring to the boil a quart of sweet cider, with about 1/4 cup of extracted honey, depending on how thick and sweet it is, and add a few grains of salt, and 6 or 8 short pieces of stick cinnamon, and as many whole allspice, and a dozen whole cloves. After heating let the cider and spices stand for several hours to develop flavor. Before you serve the cider, reheat, and strain out the spices.

Goodbye, for this time.